

What is claimed is:

1. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function comprising:
 - a first housing including at least a display unit;
 - a second housing including at least a control unit and an image capturing unit,
 - the first housing and the second housing being connected so as to be capable of taking a closed state in which the first housing and the second housing are placed one on another, and an opened state in which the surfaces of the both housings facing each other are exposed from the closed state toward the outside, and
 - the first housing being maintained at a slanted position at a predetermined angle with respect to the second housing when being opened,
 - wherein the image capturing direction of the image capturing unit directs substantially perpendicularly to a display surface of the display unit when both the housings are opened.
2. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 1, wherein the second housing includes a surface extending in substantially parallel with the display surface of the display unit when in the opened state, and the surface being substantially parallel with the display surface of the display unit is formed with a image capturing window of the image capturing unit.
3. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 1, wherein the display surface of the display unit is formed on a surface of the first housing facing to the second housing.

4. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 3, wherein the image capturing direction of the image capturing unit directs toward the side of the display surface of the display unit or the side opposite from the display surface of the display unit.

5. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 3, wherein the first housing and the second housing are foldably connected via a connecting unit, and

the portable information device further comprising an image capturing direction control unit for varying the image capturing direction of the image capturing unit in accordance with a folding angle formed between the first housing and the second housing.

6. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 5, wherein the image capturing direction control unit comprises:

a first revolving shaft provided with a pulley which rotates in conjunction with the folding angle formed between the first housing and the second housing;

a second revolving shaft provided with a pulley which is rotatably journaled in the second housing; and

a belt wound around the pulley on the first revolving shaft and the pulley on the second revolving shaft, and

the image capturing unit is secured so as to be capable of rotating with the second revolving shaft.

7. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 5, wherein the image capturing direction control unit comprises:

a crank mechanism including a first revolving shaft provided with a disc which rotates in conjunction with the folding angle formed between the first housing and the second housing;

a second revolving shaft provided with a disc rotatably journaled in the second housing; and

a connecting rod for connecting the disc on the first revolving shaft and the disc on the second revolving shaft, and

the image capturing unit is secured so as to rotate with the second revolving shaft.

8. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 5, wherein the image capturing direction control unit comprises;

a gear mechanism including a gear provided on the first revolving shaft which rotates in conjunction with the folding angle formed between the first housing and the second housing, a gear provided on the second revolving shaft rotatably journaled in the second housing, and at least one intermediate gear being meshed with the gear on the first revolving shaft and the gear on the second revolving shaft, respectively, and

the image capturing unit is secured so as to rotate with the second revolving shaft.

9. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 5, wherein when the folding angle is within a first predetermined angular range, the image capturing direction of the image capturing unit directs the direction opposite from the display surface of the display unit, and directs substantially perpendicular to the display surface.

10. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 9, wherein the first predetermined angular range is from about 100° to about 150°:

11. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 5, wherein when the folding angle is within a second predetermined angular range, the image capturing direction of the image capturing unit is directed toward inside the second housing.

12. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 11, wherein the second predetermined angular range is from about 0° to about 30°.

13. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function comprising:

a first housing;

a second housing;

a connecting unit for foldably connecting the first housing and the second housing;

an image capturing unit provided in one of the first housing and the connecting unit;

a display unit for displaying an image to be captured by the image capturing unit and a operation unit respectively provided on any one or both of the first housing and the second housing;

an image capturing direction control unit for varying the image capturing direction of the image capturing unit in accordance with the folding angle formed between the first housing and the second housing.

14. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 13, wherein when the folding angle is within a first predetermined range, the image capturing direction of the image capturing unit directs toward the display surface of the display unit and directs substantially perpendicularly to the display surface, and when the folding angle is within a second predetermined angular range, the image capturing direction of the image capturing unit directs the side opposite from the display surface of the display unit and directs substantially perpendicularly to the display surface.

15. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 14, wherein the portable information device provided with the image capturing function has a data communication function and/or a telephone call function, and the second predetermined angle is an angle suitable for operating the functions.

16. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 14, wherein the first predetermined angular range is from about 90° to about 120°, and the second predetermined angular range is from about 160° to about 180°.

17. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 13, wherein the image capturing unit is capable of capturing the image without being exposed directly toward the outside by making the portion of the first housing or the connecting unit in the vicinity of the position at which the image capturing unit is disposed substantially transparent.

18. A portable information device provided with an image capturing function according to Claim 13, wherein the image capturing direction control unit is a mechanism comprising a gear, a crank, or a pulley having a revolving shaft coaxial with the axis of rotation of the connecting unit.